



**Social Sciences Branch
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
Woods Hole, Massachusetts**



**Tell fisheries managers
what they need to understand
about your life as a commercial fisherman...
Participate in the Socio-Economic Survey
of Vessel Owners in New England and the Mid-Atlantic.**

How can filling out the survey benefit you, the fisherman?

The Social Sciences Branch (SSB) has been talking with fishermen in New England and the Mid-Atlantic. Here's some of what we've heard:

- Past regulatory analysis failed to tell the complete story of the economic and social impacts of fisheries regulations on fishermen, ports and communities.
- Fishermen have taken previous surveys, but have not been kept informed as to what happens to the data collected or what reports and analyses the data are used in.
- Decision makers in fisheries management do not consider economic impacts as heavily as biological impacts.
- NOAA Fisheries should have been collecting more data on economic and social conditions in the fisheries in the period before existing regulations were implemented.

The SSB is a part of NOAA Fisheries, but does not have the ability to enact fisheries regulations. SSB cannot change what has happened in the past. We are trying to shape what happens in the future by advocating for increased attention to the social and economic impacts of fisheries regulations on the people in the fisheries and providing complete and clear analysis of those impacts.

To be successful, we need your help. We need data from fishermen, not only in periods of biological uncertainty and regulatory change, but also routinely and over the long term. Tell us what you think is going on in your fishery, your fishing community and your life. Information from many fishermen, collected systematically, across fisheries and over time, allows the SSB to be more effective at explaining what's going on with fishermen in their day to day lives and at getting those experiences to be considered when regulatory decisions are made.

Who are we asking to take this survey?

- A sample of approximately 1,400 commercial fishing vessel owners that hold federal permits. The sample of fishermen receiving this survey includes fishermen across federally managed fisheries in New England and the Mid-Atlantic.
- We have also been on the docks in New England and Mid-Atlantic ports in the past year, interviewing crew members, including hired captains.

Why are we collecting this data?

We simply haven't yet collected enough information in a systematic way, across fisheries and over time, to effectively analyze and communicate the full impact of regulations on fishermen and fishing communities. *Experiences may differ, so we need every fisherman who receives this survey to tell us about his or her experience.* Some examples of what we ask about in this survey include:

- Your experiences running a commercial fishing business
- Family involvement and history in commercial fishing
- Your overall well-being
- Your perceptions about the fisheries management process

Is taking the survey voluntary or mandatory? What about confidentiality?

- Responses to this survey are completely voluntary and completely confidential. Your responses are NOT being collected for ANY enforcement related purposes.
- No individual owner's responses will be associated with his or her name or vessel information. NOAA Fisheries, including the SSB, will not know what fishermen are returning the survey or what a specific fisherman's responses are.

How can I be updated on data that are being collected and find out how the data are being used?

This survey packet includes a card with the address for the Social Sciences Branch website. The website provides updates on the socio-economic data that is being collected, as well as other SSB activities. After the data is collected and analyzed, the website will describe how the socio-economic data are being used and provide links to documents that use the data.

Questions or Comments? Please contact:

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